MINT STAFF
CORRESPONDANCE

Written in our 95th Year

February 17, 1986

Francis B. Frere
Assistance Director for Marketing
The United Stated Mint
Judiciary Square Building
633 3rd Street, N.W., Room 710
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Barry:

Sorry to be so long in responding to you as a result of my recent visit and study of the dies, which you and other mint officials so kindly agreed for me to inspect.

I did indeed inspect the dies in question during the week that I was in Philadelphia in late January, and it proved to be very fruitful to my study of the life and works of John R. Sinnock, former Chief Engraver of the United States Mint from the period 1925 through 1947. While I did not find anything earth shaking, I can be comforted in the fact that I do know the details concerning these dies and have no reason to wonder further about whether or not John Sinnock had any involvement with these many pieces. I did discover that there were about six representative dies of pieces that John had designed originally that had been modified and reissued for another purpose at a later time. This additional information surely enhances the study that I am conducting on Sinnock and I am thankful for your efforts and others that were involved in making the inspection of these dies possible. I am especially grateful for the assistance of Eleanor McKelvey, she is always helpful and very pleasant.

Again I thank you most sincerely for your efforts in this regard and look forward to speaking and/or seeing you some time in the future, probably at one of our ANA conventions.

Sincerely,

N. Neil Harris
Editor

NNH:lkd

the

United States Mint

ANNOUNCES

We have moved our Headquarters to the

Judiciary Square Building
633 3rd Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20220

Donna Pope

Director

0588

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Mr. Neil Harris
Editor, The Numismatist
P. O. Box 2366
Colorado Springs, CO 80901

April 23, 1985

Francis B. Frere
Assistant Director for Marketing
The United States Mint
Judiciary Square Building
633 3rd Street, N.W., Room 710
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Barry:

Had I known, while I was in San Antonio in February, that you would be the person I would need to contact on the matter to follow, I certainly would have tugged on your ear at that time.

However, during a telephone call to Elenora Hayden last week relative to plans that I am currently arranging to visit Philadelphia for further research on John R. Sinnock, she suggested that I direct my inquiry to you.

To refresh your memory on what my study entails I will recap the project. My study was prompted by the fact that since March, 1975, ANA's vaults have housed two large boxes of Sinnock papers and other memorabilia, donated by a Louie Dlugocz of Lackawanna, New York. I vowed then that someday I would inventory the donation to see how significant the contents were. As it turned out, the donation is very significant. Most of his works were represented by photographs of his original models, correspondence relating to most of these, preliminary and final sketches of many issues...hundreds and hundreds of historically important documents relative to his work and his life. When I began inspecting the donation in the fall of 1983, I felt that this would be a rather short project, it has turned into very involved one.

Since late 1983 I have uncovered countless number of pieces that not many of us in the hobby were aware that John Sinnock designed and/or created. At this moment, I have a list that is nearing 200 pieces that he created both in the private sector and for The United States Mint in Philadelphia.

Almost two years ago when I was in Philadelphia doing the initial research outside of the ANA headquarters on the Sinnock donation, I visited with Elenora Hayden and she was of great help to me at that time. During that visit she asked me if it would be beneficial for me

to inspect any of the medal dies to further the study, and, at that time I felt that it would be premature since I really did not have the knowledge at that point to know for what I was really looking.

However, now it is time for me to seek permission to inspect, if possible, a number of medal dies at the Philadelphia Mint to either refute or confirm whether or not John R. Sinnock did indeed design some of the pieces of which I have only superficial knowledge at this time.

Enclosed you will find a copy of a document intitled "Medal Dies in the Medal Department", which was acquired by R. W. Julian from Frank Gasparro back in 1974, and has been an invaluable aid to me since receiving it from Bob a number of months ago. If you inspect the list you will note a number of dies that relate to medal stock numbers, well known to all of us that are still available from the United States Mint. Beginning on page 13 you will notice there is an indication of the John R. Sinnock, Assistant Engraver Era, for the period 1917-1919. From that point on through pages 21 there are a number of individual listings that have indications at the right hand margin as to whether or not Sinnock did indeed design these various pieces. Those that do not have question marks are those that I can confirm were designed by Sinnock. Those with question marks are those I suspect might have been designed by Sinnock, but can find no references to confirm whether or not he was indeed involved with any of these pieces.

Therefore, after this very long commentary I would like to request permission to inspect medal dies in the die vault, at the Philadelphia Mint from about die number 432 through numbered dies that were created through 1947. This task would all but complete those facts that are still unknown as to Sinnock's involvement in some of these obscure and non-public pieces. I intend to be in Philadelphia the entire week of May 27 and would be available at anytime during that week to accomplish this task, if it can so be arranged.

I might also relate to you that this project has official ANA sanction and it is our desire to complete a formal published catalogue of Mr. Sinnock's works to be published in the spring of 1988 and to be accompanied by an extensive exhibition of his works at our museum here in Colorado Springs.

I would be very greatful for any assistance that you would be able to provide me on this matter. I can assure you, on behalf of the ANA, we

would be fully appreciative of your efforts in this regard. If there are any additional questions that you might have concerning this matter please feel free to call me at any time.

Sincerely,

N. Neil Harris
Editor

NNH:lkd
Enclosure

P.S. I might suggest that the enclosed "Medal Die List" be forwarded to Elenora for her files, I'm sure it would be of interest to her.

Enclosure

Written in our 95th Year

February 17, 1986

Mrs. Donna Pope, Director
United States Mint
Judiciary Square Building
633 3rd Strret, N.W., Room 710
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Mrs. Pope:

Sorry to be so long in responding to you as a result of my recent visit and study of the dies, which you and other mint officials so kindly agreed for me to inspect.

I did indeed inspect the dies in question during the week that I was in Philadelphia in late January, and it proved to be very fruitful to my study of the life and works of John R. Sinnock, former Chief Engraver of the United States Mint from the period 1925 through 1947. While I did not find anything earth shaking, I can be comforted in the fact that I do know the details concerning these dies and have no reason to wonder further about whether or not John Sinnock had any involvement with these many pieces. I did discover that there were about six representative dies of pieces that John had designed originally that had been modified and reissued for another purpose at a later time. This additional information surely enhances the study that I am conducting on Sinnock and I am thankful for your efforts and others that were involved in making the inspection of these dies possible. I am especially grateful for the assistance of Eleanor McKelvey, she is always helpful and very pleasant.

Thanking you most sincerely for your efforts in this regard and look forward to speaking and/or seeing you some time in the future, probably at one of our ANA conventions.

Sincerely,

N. Neil Harris
Editor

NNH:lkd

August 1, 1985

Mrs. Donna Pope, Director
United States Mint
Judiciary Square Building
633 3rd Street, N.W., Room 710
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Mrs. Pope:

I am sure that your trip to Sweden and attendance at the F.I.D.E.M. Congress in Stockholm remains a fond memory, as it does with me. I'm sure all of us that attended the F.I.D.E.M. Conference left there with fond memories of Stocholm and lasting visions of the outstanding medallic art that we all saw on exhibit.

I appreciated the opportunity to briefly discuss with you the project on which I am working relative to the works and life of John R. Sinnock, former Chief Engraver, of the United States Mint. Since returning from Sweden I have been involved with more pressing ANA matters, especially relating to the upcoming ANA convention in Baltimore in August, this has precluded me from being able to put all the enclosures in order to send to you for your consideration and study.

The enclosures are explained as follows: First, there is a copy of my letter written to Mr. Frere, dated April 23, 1985, which was my original explanation and request to inspect medal dies at the Philadelphia Mint. That letter also explains further details of the Sinnock project. The next enclosure is the die list which I mentioned to you in Sweden that gave me the basic foundation for which to suspect pieces that might have been designed by John R. Sinnock that is not now known. And thirdly, I have sent you a photocopy set of the simplified version of the visual check list of John's works, which is my traveling bible for this study.

I think that if you read the April 23 letter to Mr. Frere, it will sufficiently bring you up to date on the project as a whole and my specific request to inspect medal dies for the purpose already stated.

Upon my departure for Philadelphia on May 25th I was well aware that I had not received any response to my letter and certainly no permission relative to my request. However, I did not want to be burdensome with my request and therefore I decided to merely wait and call Mr. Frere's office and/or speak to Eleanor Hayden about the hoped for permission that I sought. Upon calling her a couple of times during that week, I

was informed that Mr. Frere was busy and permission would not be forthcoming.

Since I had plenty of details and research matters in front of me, I kept exceedingly busy on other details for the remainder of the week, and decided that at a later date I would hopefully gain this permission by placing another request.

This then is what I am doing at the present time. I feel that the study which we are conducting will not be complete and could not be complete without inspection of these dies in question. John Sinnock has long been overlooked as an outstanding medallist in this country, and with the wealth of information that we have in the donation in the ANA vaults, I feel that we truly have a chance to correct his status.

In closing, I must also add that since this study has become very involved and detailed it will be necessary for me to once again travel to Philadelphia for some further research at the library and also the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Since this is the case, it is really no tragedy that I was not able to acquire permission to inspect these medal dies in May, but hope that I can arrange for a time somewhere in the future that I may do this at the convenience of everyone involved.

I look forward to your response and hope that you will favor us with this permission that is so badly needed in this regard.

If you should have any further questions please feel free to call me at any time or possibly we can meet in Baltimore should you attend, which I suspect might be the case.

Sincerely,

N. Neil Harris
Editor

NNH:lkd

Enclosure

Written in our 95th Year

February 17, 1986

Eleanor McKelvey
Exhibits and Public Services Manager
United States Mint
4th and Arch Streets
Philadelphia, PA 15132

Dear Eleanor:

It was certainly nice and pleasant to see and visit with you once again upon my recent visit at the Mint in late January. I certainly enjoyed having dinner with you and your husband that evening at Victors and will always remember it as a most pleasant visit in that regard.

Just wanted to drop you a short note and thank you for all of your help and pleasant assistance in the matter of my inspecting the various dies that may have been involved with the work and life of John R. Sinnock. As I mentioned to you then, I didn't find any thing exactly earth shaking, but I am comforted by the fact that I can no longer wonder whether or not John was seriously involved with any of the pieces that were produced by those dies. I did, however, discover about six pieces that have been modified at a later date from works that were originally created by John's hand. This information of these later pieces will certainly increase the knowledge and reliability of the study that I am conducting and have been conducting for some time on John R. Sinnock.

By now, you have probably received your mailed copy of the AMSA issue of Medallic Sculpture and also the Directory of Artist's, which we recently published and I hope that you enjoyed them.

I passed along your kind comments and praises of the current issue of Medallic Sculpture, to Cory Gillilland in reference to the many "how to" articles that you so hungrily digested in this latest issue. As I had mentioned to you then, we plan to do more articles of this nature

since it seems to be the favor of most of the membership and therefore this general trend will certainly continue, that is if we are able to get enough submissions of articles that provide this kind of information.

Once again thanks for all of your help and as always, it is a pleasure to see and talk with you any time.

Sincerely,

N. Neil Harris
Editor

NNH:lkd

THE NUMISMATIST
Official publication of the
American Numismatic Association
P.O. Box 2366 · Colorado Springs · Colorado 80901-2366
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N. NEIL HARRIS
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June 27, 1983

Miss Eleonora Hayden
Department of the Treasury
Bureau of the Mint
501 13th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Eleonora:

Just a short note to thank you for your time and interest in my project relative to John R. Sinnock during my visit earlier this month.

Your graciousness will always be remembered as will your willingness to help.

Above all it was nice to finally meet you after all this time of having only communicated by letter and telephone.

Eleanor McKelvey, was also very helpful at the Mint in Philadelphia. In case she hasn't told you by now, she has three ledger books that certainly need preserving. They are the chief coiner's daily authorization records of medals struck from 1924 through 1944; gold, silver and bronze. These records revealed that many of the pieces that Sinnock created in those years were indeed produced by the mint...not private enterprise. No wonder Medallic Art Company had no record of striking them.

Could you have any influence in seeing that someday these records are microfilmed? They surely need to be sometime soon.

It scared me to realize that had not Eleanor plucked them from material that was being destroyed...they too would have been lost.

My trip was of great success. Everyone everywhere was very helpful. A number of new facts were uncovered about Sinnock as well as some of his works. It will take a few months to compile all gathered...but when digested and properly recorded I will send you a copy.

My two days in Philadelphia only scratched the surface and I will be planning another trip to Philadelphia sometime late this year or early in 1984. At that time I would like to make arrangements, if possible, to inspect some of the medal dies. Naturally, I'll keep you informed as to my plans as they come near.

Continued on Page Two

In the meantime I wonder how I might arrange to acquire a list of the medals created from about 1917 through 1947. I recall, as Bob Julian does, a list of medal dies being supplied to him by someone at the Mint during his research some years ago. I talked to him recently and he can't locate his list as it's packed away with all of the research of that period...which comprises scores of boxes, etc. As he recalls the list is already prepared...he was merely sent photocopies of same.

I would be very appreciative for any assistance you could provide in the preceding matter.

Ironically, Medallic Art Company had some of the Undersecretary and Assistant Secretary mint medals by Sinnock...that has puzzled me as to reverse designs. They have loaned these and other Sinnock medals for photography purposes...they are here now. When available I will send you print copies for your files.

Again, many thanks for your help and please be assured that proper acknowledgment will be given to you for all of your assistance.

Sincerely,

Neil

N. Neil Harris
Editor

NNH/jhh